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Performance evaluation of professional managers by local politicians

survey research in Dutch municipalities

Henk J. ter Bogt

SOM-theme E Financial markets and institutions

Abstract

This paper is concerned with performance evaluation of top professional managers by local politicians. Based on the opinions of a small group of experts and a written survey of 262 aldermen, it examines criteria and performance evaluation styles which are used by aldermen of Dutch municipalities - elected politicians - to evaluate performances of professional managers. The paper examines to what extent the large number of aldermen who participated in the survey displayed characteristics of politicians using the 'operations-conscious' (or 'facilitating') performance evaluation style. Based on previous case research, this style was added to three evaluation styles for the government sector which originated from Hopwood's evaluation styles for the profit sector. The survey shows that, in general, aldermen judge whether professional managers and their organizations function in a 'businesslike' manner. In this respect, evaluation of top managers may be in line with more businesslike and performance-oriented control of government organizations, which is essential to New Public Management. However, aldermen are usually not only or mainly interested in the way managers function in a businesslike manner and in concrete and 'objective' data on outputs, costs and efficiency. Aldermen actually evaluate top managers' performances on a rather wide range of criteria. Subjective impressions of these criteria play an important part in their evaluations. The outcome of the survey is a more detailed description of local politicians' performance evaluation style and a refinement of the operations-conscious style.

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1. Introduction

In business administration, interest in performances of organizations usually entails measurement and evaluation of performances of organization units and their managers (see for example Emmanuel et al., 1991, pp. 251-258; Simons, 2000, pp. 230-245; Drury, 2000, pp. 597-603). In line with this, in recent years many Dutch government organizations have focused on more 'accountable management' or 'businesslike' control, i.e. control based on concrete agreements about performances (cf. Humphrey and Olson, 1995, pp. 347-350). They have paid more attention to outputs and related aspects of performance.¹ Municipalities, in particular, have been active in this area for quite some time. In planning and control documents such as budgets and annual accounts they have increasingly mentioned not only financial information, but also, for example, all kinds of activities and products to be realized within the financial budgets. As far as control of municipal organizations is concerned, the introduction of performance budgets has resulted in a formal shift of emphasis from inputs to outputs and related performances (Van Helden, 1998b; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000, pp. 139 and 247-248). Nowadays municipalities also pay more attention to transparency of the outcomes resulting from activities and outputs.

This paper is concerned with the highest level of performance evaluation within government organizations, i.e. performance evaluation of top professional managers (civil servants) by politicians. In particular, it examines performance evaluation of municipalities' professional top managers by aldermen. The paper focuses on the performance evaluation criteria which are emphasized by aldermen; i.e. on general survey results rather than differences between groups of aldermen. The picture painted in this paper is based mainly on a large-scale survey of Dutch aldermen, elected politicians,² which was conducted in 2000.

The research reported in this paper elaborates on previous research on aldermen's use of information (ter Bogt, 2001b) and particularly on case research, including interviews with aldermen, in three big Dutch municipalities (ter Bogt, 2001a). These interviews showed that a relatively high proportion of the aldermen use a broadly-based performance evaluation style, the so-called operations-conscious or

facilitating style. Further research was conducted by means of a questionnaire, which meant that a much larger group of aldermen could be studied. Despite its limitations, the questionnaire survey might indicate what aspects are emphasized by Dutch aldermen evaluating the performances of top professional managers. In this way the survey might show to what extent a large group of aldermen adopt the operations-conscious style, as it was defined on the basis of the case research. In addition, the survey might provide an insight into the extent to which politicians evaluating performances now attach importance to 'objective' and 'businesslike' information from accounting systems.

Section 2 of this paper contains a brief discussion of some literature on control of government organizations. The role of performance measurement and performance evaluation in organization control is dealt with in section 3. In addition, some performance evaluation styles for the government sector are described. These styles have previously been defined; they are based on the so-called Hopwood-styles for the profit sector. The empirical research is introduced in section 4, after which section 5 reviews the expectations of a panel of experts with regard to aspects which are emphasized in the different evaluation styles. Next, in section 6, the results of the survey of aldermen are presented and these empirical data are compared with the experts' opinions from section 5. Finally, a brief discussion and summary follow in section 7.

2. Output information and control of government organizations

In recent years various changes have been made to management control of Dutch government organizations. Many municipalities have been changing their organization structures since 1990 or even before that. Professional organizations were divided into more or less independent units. Politicians and professional managers often made agreements about performances to be realized by organization units, for example through contract management. In the Netherlands this development, i.e. use of what, internationally, is often called New Public Management, was encouraged by the

Policy and Management Initiative (PMI), a project in which municipalities and provinces could participate (van Helden, 1998b; Kickert, 2000, pp. 33-54).

As a result, several municipalities began to pay more attention to outputs and control based on principles from business administration and the private sector. Until then, budget processes involved mainly allocating resources for various tasks according to political criteria. Organization control consisted mainly in drawing up rules and procedures and ensuring that they were observed. As for budgets, attention was often only focused on the legitimacy of expenditure and on actual expenditure, which was compared with estimated expenditure (Evans and Bellamy, 1995, p. 37; Groot and van Helden, 1999, p. 220).

The fact that municipalities paid more attention to outputs – at least formally – meant a broadening and shift of emphasis in control. In fact, this shift of emphasis meant that less attention was paid to control of processes and specific actions by civil servants ('action control') and more attention was paid to the results of their work ('results control').

However, it is doubtful whether municipalities always met requirements for sensible and responsible use of results controls. To be able to make sensible use of results controls, managers have to know what results are required for their ultimate goals (outcomes) and these results have to be measurable (Merchant, 1982, pp. 49-50; Hofstede, 1981, p. 196). Government policy areas differ considerably in the extent to which these conditions can be met (see also Anthony and Young, 1994, pp. 10-11 and 52-55; Mascarenhas, 1996, pp. 15 and 21-22; Bordewijk and Klaassen, 2000, pp. 93-96; Boston, 2000, pp. 25-42). Relatively many government activities result in outputs which are difficult to measure (Mintzberg, 1996, pp. 79-80). In this connection, it should be noted that in many profit organizations the interest in process indicators has increased recently (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; Simons, 2000, pp. 192-219).

As a matter of fact, it is not clear what effects PMI has had in the Netherlands and New Public Management has had elsewhere. It would seem that the output-orientedness of the planning and control documents of a lot of Dutch municipalities leaves something to be desired. Furthermore, politicians often make rather limited use of available performance data (van Helden, 1998; Bordewijk and Klaassen, 2000; ter

Bogt, 2001a). Similar observations have been made in other countries (see also Perrin, 1998, 1999; Gregory, 2000; Olson et al., 1998, 2001; Pallot, 2001).

3. Control and performance evaluation

Perhaps aldermen and other politicians do only make limited use of available output information in planning and control documents. However, they may still be interested in a more businesslike and performance-oriented culture in, and that kind of control of, their organization, if only to live up to the expectations of the 'outside world' (Staw, 1990, p. 79; Weick, 1977, pp. 277-290; Lapsley, 1999, pp. 203-206). In practice, Dutch government and non-profit organizations have paid much more attention to staff quality, competence management, and job appraisal interviews with civil servants since circa 1990 (see also Kuijs, 1996, p. 16; Vlaming, 1998, p. 28; Kickert, 2000, pp. 83-86; Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, 2001). It is possible that aldermen do not always use factual and 'objective' data for businesslike control of their organizations, just as little as many top managers in profit organizations use precise, aggregated and written information from the accounting information system (Mintzberg, 1972, pp. 94-96; 1980, pp. 148-149; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1995, pp. 139-141; Donabedian et al., 1998, pp. 372-377). To control their organizations and evaluate managers' performances, aldermen possibly also use information about developments and performances in their organizations which they have obtained from, for example, their own impressions, conversations with civil servants or from signals from citizens and companies (see also ter Bogt, 2001b).

In the past, when in most Dutch government organizations only information on inputs was generally available and the publication of their annual accounts was usually (very) delayed, civil servants' performances could hardly be evaluated on outputs. In general, the organizations did not pay regular attention to civil servants' performances. New Public Management presupposes a shift in emphasis on the part of professional managers and politicians with regard to control and performance evaluation of organizations (see also Hood, 1991, 1995; Evans and Bellamy, 1995; Kitchener et al., 2000, pp. 223-225). The question is whether a formal striving for

more businesslike control of government organizations and more emphasis on their outputs is also apparent from performance evaluation of civil servants. This paper is particularly concerned with the question of whether municipal organizations systematically pay attention to top civil servants' performances and what aspects are emphasized by aldermen when they are evaluating managers. These aspects are considered to give an indication of the aldermen's evaluation styles.³

Hopwood (1972, 1972a) has laid the foundations for a number of performance evaluation styles by conducting research in the profit sector. By now, especially the behavioural effects of the different styles have been studied and sometimes the definitions of the styles have been altered slightly (see for example Briers and Hirst, 1990; Vagueur and Peiperl, 2000). Hopwood's 'basic styles' were also used as a basis for previous case research on performance evaluation in the government sector. To that end, the styles were adapted to the government sector (ter Bogt, 2001a).⁴ After a number of aldermen had been interviewed, a fourth style was added to Hopwood's three basic styles, namely the operations-conscious style. Each of the styles will be described below. Section 5 reviews the expectations of a group of experts with regard to criteria which are emphasized in the different evaluation styles (see also Appendix 1).

In the output-constrained style of performance evaluation, the main question is whether a professional manager or his / her department has kept within budgets formulated in quantitative terms and, in particular, has achieved previously agreed performances (output goals) in a short period of time (e.g. a year). The quantitative output agreements are therefore not purely financial in nature. They are multidimensional, because they are concerned with financial and output information, including information about amounts of money, costs per unit, numbers, quantities and quality.

In the outcome-conscious style of performance evaluation, quantitative output and accounting information plays an important part.⁵ This information includes data on budgets, costs per unit, outputs and other performances which are considered to contribute to the desired effects. However, the limitations of these data are understood. Ultimately, most attention is paid to the extent to which managers make a positive contribution to effect maximization (or cost minimization) and to the long-term

performance of the organization (ter Bogt, 2001a p. 626). Politicians therefore also pay attention to qualitative information on external developments and perhaps to certain subjective factors in addition to quantitative output information. Although accounting information is rather important for the performance evaluation style mentioned above, all kinds of other information are also taken into consideration.

The 'implicit' style of performance evaluation is a residual category, in that financial and output data play a minor part or little formal performance evaluation takes place. Perhaps an alderman does not judge a manager's performance as long as the alderman and the manager get along well and there are few complaints about the manager. In this style, the manager's performance may be discussed only when the politician is particularly dissatisfied with it. In general, most attention is paid to rather subjective and qualitative aspects, and little attention is paid to accounting information on the professional manager's actual performance. In the implicit style, the evaluation criteria may vary, also for a particular person in the course of time.

In the 'operations-conscious' or 'facilitating' style of performance evaluation, considerable attention is paid to the extent to which a manager acts as a 'facilitator', i.e. ensures that the organization and alderman concerned perform well in the short and long term. The operations-conscious style of performance evaluation, which is not based on Hopwood's styles, has been described as follows (ter Bogt, 2001a, p. 637).

In the operations-conscious style, attention is focused on a rather wide range of performance aspects. Some attention is paid to quantitative budgets and output information (including 'result-orientedness'). In addition, much attention is paid to a professional manager's activities and the extent to which he / she ensures that a professional organization functions well, at present as well as in the future. The politician concerned assesses whether the professional manager makes a positive contribution to the internal organization of the unit for which he is responsible, e.g. to work processes, whether he has a feeling for new developments and shows initiative. The underlying idea is that departments which function well contribute considerably to the realization of desired performances, at present and in the future. Furthermore, politicians using the operations-conscious style also pay considerable attention to the way in which managers solve all kinds of short-term problems - so that these

problems do not bother the politicians - and to the way in which managers deal with the politicians' personal judgements and wishes.

In the previous case research (Ter Bogt, 2001a, p. 627), it was hypothesized that a shift in control emphasis from inputs to outputs could imply that politicians will choose a more output-constrained or outcome-conscious style of performance evaluation. However, the interviews which had been held in 1999 with seven aldermen of three big Dutch municipalities, namely Groningen, Leeuwarden and The Hague, hardly supported this hypothesis. That is why the operations-conscious style was added to the three styles which were derived from Hopwood's work. The characteristics of this broadly-based evaluation style are based on criteria which the interviewees considered to be of the utmost importance to performance evaluation of their professional top managers. The survey research may indicate to what extent the opinions of a large group of aldermen support the above description of the operations-conscious style, or whether their evaluation style more closely resembles one of the styles which were based on Hopwood.

4. Design of the empirical research

In the year 2000, aldermen of Dutch municipalities with 20,000 or more inhabitants were sent a brief questionnaire (see Appendix 3). It included questions about their use of performance information in planning and control documents, of job appraisal interviews, and of criteria for the evaluation of highly placed professional managers. The latter parts of the questionnaire are relevant to this paper. The questionnaire was based on literature as well as previous interviews with aldermen (ter Bogt, 2001a). In this way, the opinions of a large group of aldermen could be gauged. Although the survey did not yield an in-depth picture, the information obtained was more general and representative of the population than the data obtained from the interviews (see ter Bogt, 2001b for aldermen's use of various sources of information).

The numbered questionnaires were sent to 698 aldermen of Dutch municipalities with 20,000 or more inhabitants. The names of the aldermen were taken from the *Gids Gemeentebesturen 2000* (guide to municipalities) of the

Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG, 2000). The guide also contains data on such aspects as municipality size and aldermen's political affiliations.

On 1 January 1999 there were 520 municipalities in the Netherlands, including 206 municipalities with 20,000 or more inhabitants. The 314 municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants were not included in the survey.⁶ Because the 108 smaller municipalities with 20,000 to 35,000 inhabitants were a relatively homogeneous group in terms of organization size and tasks, not all of them were included in the survey. All aldermen of 67 of these smaller municipalities, which were spread all over the country, received a questionnaire. In addition, all aldermen of the 98 Dutch municipalities with 35,000 or more inhabitants were included in the research.⁷ So, questionnaires were sent to aldermen in 165 municipalities in total; from 140 municipalities one or more forms were returned.

The 698 questionnaires which were sent out yielded, after a reminder, 262 replies which were suitable for further processing (final response of 37.5%). The respondents, who remain anonymous, used a five-point scale to answer questions about the extent to which various performance evaluation criteria were taken into consideration.

In the case of two of the performance evaluation criteria included in the questionnaire, there were significant differences between the answers given by the aldermen who returned their forms within the period set first and the answers of those who did not return their forms until they had been sent a reminder.⁸ This concerned the following criteria: 'number of complaints by citizens, companies, etc, about the manager's department / sector' and 'efficiency of the department'. However, these criteria are not among the seven criteria which, on average, the respondents considered to be the most important (see Table 3). The two criteria will not be examined further in this paper.

In addition to the 2000 survey, a brief survey of Dutch experts on control and financial management of government organizations was conducted in 2002. The experts were selected from persons who work for government organizations (in the government sector itself or for consultancy firms) and from persons who are employed in universities (in the field of public management and business

administration). These persons were given a brief written description of the four performance evaluation styles distinguished for the government sector (see Section 3) and they were asked to indicate the degrees of importance which, in their opinion, politicians would attach to the criteria on a list of eighteen evaluation criteria (see Appendix 1). In total, seventeen persons gave their opinion (response 77.3%). The experts' opinions, which will be presented in the next section, can be used as reference material which can be compared with the aldermen's responses.

5. Opinions of a panel of experts

Appendix 1 summarizes the experts' opinions. It shows the experts' average scores on each criterion used in the four styles and also shows standard deviations. This section focuses on the criteria to which relatively much or relatively little importance is attached in a particular style (average value ≥ 4.0 or < 3.0 respectively and standard deviation < 1.0). Again the criteria 'number of complaints by citizens, companies, etc, about the manager's department / sector' and 'efficiency of the department' will not be examined further, because of the comparability of the experts' opinions with those of the aldermen.

According to the experts, politicians using the output-constrained style of performance evaluation would place much emphasis on the following criteria: 'result-orientedness', 'realization of performances mentioned in the budget', 'operating within the financial budget', and 'cost-consciousness'. They thought that, in this style, very little emphasis would be placed on the following criteria: 'cooperative attitude', 'good contacts with the municipal council', 'ability to anticipate new / external developments in time' and 'showing initiative'.

The experts expected that, in the outcome-conscious style, much emphasis would be placed on 'result-orientedness', 'ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly', 'ability to anticipate new developments in time', and 'realization of performances mentioned in the budget'. In addition, politicians would pay little attention to 'observance of rules and procedures'.

In the case of the implicit style, the experts assumed that much emphasis would be placed on the following criteria: 'a feeling for my political wishes and needs',

‘cooperative attitude’, and ‘good contacts with me’. Little importance would be attached to ‘result-orientedness’, ‘ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly’, ‘ability to operate within the financial budget’ and ‘cost-consciousness’.

The experts assumed that politicians using the operations-conscious style would place much emphasis on a very wide range of criteria, namely ‘a feeling for my political wishes and needs’, ‘cooperative attitude’, ‘good contacts with me’, ‘good contacts with subordinates’, ‘ability to anticipate new / external developments in time’, ‘initiative’, and ‘internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible’. Little emphasis would be placed on ‘observance of rules and procedures’.

Apparently the experts expected that politicians would place much emphasis on a limited number of criteria when using the output-constrained style or the implicit style for performance evaluation of professional top managers. The aldermen would focus then on finances / performance-orientedness or the managers’ good contacts with them respectively. The experts also assumed that various criteria would hardly be considered by politicians using either style.

The experts’ opinions suggest that the outcome-conscious style is more broadly-based than the output-constrained style and the implicit style. In the outcome-conscious style, a larger number of criteria would receive much attention, according to the experts. The criteria are also spread over slightly more areas for special attention. The experts expected that politicians using this style would place much emphasis on performances, but would certainly also assess whether the work was done quickly, flexibly and in a future-oriented manner. Furthermore, the experts thought that almost all other aspects would be of ‘medium’ importance and that few criteria would receive very little attention in this style. In the operations-conscious or facilitating style, too, very few aspects would receive little attention from politicians, according to the experts. The experts also indicated that an alderman who used the operations-conscious style would place much emphasis on a large number of criteria ranging from good contacts with himself / herself and other parties involved with the municipal organization, showing initiative, future-oriented actions, to good management of the professional organization. According to the experts, aldermen using the operations-conscious style would place ‘a medium degree’ of emphasis on performances and financial management.

6. Results of the survey research on aldermen

The survey of aldermen was completed by 262 persons. More than one third of the respondents came from municipalities with 20,000 to 35,000 inhabitants, almost one third from municipalities with 35,000 < 70,000 inhabitants and also almost one third from municipalities with $\geq 70,000$ inhabitants. The number of years of experience as an alderman varied from less than 1 to 21 years. The respondents were almost evenly spread over the political parties or groups of political parties which were the most important in the municipalities concerned at the time of the survey, namely christian-democrats, social-democrats, liberal-conservatives and other parties (see also ter Bogt, 2001b and 2002).

Performance evaluation and job appraisal interviews

Professional managers can be evaluated formally by means of job appraisal interviews, during which various aspects of their performances can be discussed. The outcome of such interviews has consequences for the remunerations and future careers of the managers. Previous interviews have shown that managers sometimes even have to leave their jobs as a result of job appraisal interviews (see ter Bogt, 1999, pp. 633-634). Job appraisal interviews with top civil servants are often formally initiated by town clerks. Aldermen sometimes attend such interviews in person (i.e. contribute directly). When they do not attend the interviews in person, they can often inform the interviewers of their opinions orally or in writing (i.e. contribute indirectly).

Table 1 shows whether job appraisal interviews with professional top managers took place at the respondents' municipalities with some regularity and also shows the role of the aldermen with regard to these interviews. Apart from the managers' performances, other subjects could be discussed during the interviews.

Table 1. Job appraisal interviews with professional top managers and the aldermen's involvement in these interviews

	<i>number (n)</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>do not know</i>
<i>do job appraisal interviews with professional top managers take place at your municipality with some regularity (e.g. once a year)?</i>	261	226	25	10
<i>are you, as an alderman, directly or indirectly involved in the job appraisal interviews – e.g. because you inform the interviewer, e.g. the town clerk or mayor, of your opinion of the managers?</i>	244	150	94	-

Table 1 shows that the municipalities of most respondents held job appraisal interviews with top managers. It seems that the municipalities sought to evaluate professional top managers' performances in a businesslike manner, formally at least. Furthermore, most aldermen played a part, directly or indirectly, in the interviews.

Relatively many aldermen also used informal methods to let professional managers know what they thought of their performances. This is evident from the following responses to this question, 'Apart from job appraisal interviews, do you use informal methods to let managers know what your opinions on their performances are?':⁹

- 176 respondents indicated that they occasionally let them know in general terms;
- 68 respondents let them know, particularly when they were very pleased about something;
- 75 respondents let them know, particularly when they were very dissatisfied with something;
- 17 respondents almost never let them know.

The responses indicate that the aldermen judged performances not only when they were very dissatisfied with the managers' performances, but also when they were pleased. Only a few aldermen almost never said anything about the managers' performances.

Evaluation criteria

The survey contained a few questions about criteria which are used by aldermen to evaluate their professional top managers' performances. The answers to these questions gave an idea of criteria which are emphasized by aldermen evaluating performances. This for its part could be regarded as an indication of their evaluation style.

First, the interviewees had to indicate which two factors or criteria they considered to be the most important in evaluating professional top managers. Because they were asked an open question, the respondents formulated their answers in varying terms.¹⁰ Yet it was possible to distill the responses into a few groups of relatively homogeneous criteria.¹¹ Criteria which were hardly mentioned or which were described in cryptic terms were put together into the category 'other'.

The groups of similar criteria in Table 2 consist of rather general evaluation criteria which overlap partially and may be interconnected. Sometimes the aldermen's answers may have been arbitrarily classified into a certain group, but that does not detract from the general picture which emerges from Table 2.

Table 2 shows that most aldermen evaluated professional top managers on rather broad criteria, i.e. not primarily on data about outputs, costs and efficiency. The aldermen emphasized considerably more factors than the criteria which are stressed in the output-constrained style and the outcome-conscious style (see Section 3). In another part of the survey many aldermen indicated that they made limited use of concrete performance information in planning and control documents, even if these documents contained a lot of performance data (see ter Bogt, 2001b).

Most of the evaluation criteria in Table 2 do not really relate to concrete input and output results. They are rather general criteria and probably difficult to measure 'objectively', therefore personal impressions may be particularly important. The aldermen placed much emphasis on such – probably lowly measurable - aspects as 'management qualities', 'result-orientedness', 'expertise', 'control and organization of departments', 'a feeling for politics', 'ability to think along with aldermen', 'loyalty', 'integrity' and 'openness'.

Table 2. Important evaluation criteria mentioned by the aldermen themselves

<i>criterion</i>	<i>number of times mentioned</i>		
	<i>as a first criterion</i>	<i>as a second criterion</i>	<i>in total</i>
<i>management qualities; good control and organization of department or unit; good management; a feeling for good business management; encourage staff</i>	66	30	96
<i>goal-orientedness; result-orientedness; stand by agreements; do what is planned; realize planned output; realize good performances</i>	48	36	84
<i>a feeling for management and politics; anticipate political needs; a feeling for managerial matters; can think along with politicians</i>	30	49	79
<i>openness; good communication; contacts with citizens, the municipal council, staff, local authorities and society; good information supply; social skills</i>	21	31	52
<i>expertise; quality of advice and products; knowledge and understanding; know-how</i>	26	23	49
<i>loyalty; cooperative attitude; integrity; reliability</i>	17	13	30
<i>initiative; vision; anticipate developments</i>	11	13	24
<i>think / work integrally; integrality of proposals</i>	5	16	21
<i>other</i>	24	35	59
<i>not completed ('missing')</i>	14	16	30
<i>total</i>	262	262	524

The open question about the two main evaluation criteria was followed by a question which involved the use of a structured list of evaluation criteria (see Appendix 1). These criteria, which overlapped partially and might be interconnected, were taken from previous interviews and the performance evaluation styles developed for the government sector. Using a five-point scale, the respondents could indicate the degrees of importance which they attached to the eighteen criteria on the list when evaluating performances of professional top managers. As was mentioned before, two of the criteria will not be examined further in this paper.

The survey results show that the respondents tended to attach some importance to each evaluation criterion. Perhaps they did not want to admit openly that they

considered a criterion to be unimportant. On the other hand, they possibly really did attach importance to very many aspects (cf. the experts' opinions with regard to the operations-conscious style in Appendix 1). For almost all criteria, most aldermen at least ticked the midpoint of the five-point scale. That is why the dispersion of answers was quite limited (see also the standard deviations in Table 3). However, some differences could be observed in the weight they attached to various criteria.

Factor analysis was used in order to determine underlying factors ('dimensions') which are important to aldermen's performance evaluation styles and the different aspects they emphasize. This analysis yielded six factors which can be referred to as follows (see also Appendix 2):

1. initiative, vision and result;
2. personal relationships and helpfulness;
3. financial control;
4. external image and achievement of agreed performances;
5. external contacts;
6. performance of own organization.

The six factors are the most important underlying dimensions of the aldermen's responses to the sixteen criteria. They are indicative of aspects which aldermen take into consideration. The factors 1, 2 and 6 are very similar to the criteria in the Tables 2 and 3 to which aldermen evaluating performances attach great importance. However, the explanatory power of the factors is rather limited (see Appendix 2).

Table 3 shows eight criteria to which the respondents attached, on average, great importance when evaluating top managers' performances (average value ≥ 4.0) and one criterion to which they attached little importance (average < 3.0 ; standard deviation in all cases < 1.0). The different criteria are listed in Table 3 in order of decreasing average value attached to them. The average values for the criteria excluded from Table 3 range from 3 to 4 (see Appendix 1). Apparently the aldermen attached less importance to them when evaluating managers' performances, but did not consider them to be of little importance. These criteria include 'cost-consciousness', 'good contacts with subordinates', 'good contacts with citizens and companies', 'good contacts with the aldermen', 'ability to operate within the financial budget', 'realization of performances

mentioned in the budget', 'observance of rules and procedures', and 'reports on the manager and department in the media'.

Table 3. Evaluation criteria from a structured list to which the aldermen attached relatively much or little importance

<i>criterion</i>	<i>number of respondents (n)</i>	<i>to what extent emphasized in performance evaluations? (% of n)</i>			<i>average (standard deviation) *)</i>
		<i>very much</i>	<i>rather much</i>	<i>slightly / hardly / not</i>	
<i>result-orientedness</i>	257	44.0	51.0	5.1	4.39 (0.58)
<i>showing initiative</i>	257	37.0	55.3	7.8	4.29 (0.61)
<i>a feeling for my political wishes and needs</i>	258	34.9	57.0	8.1	4.25 (0.65)
<i>ability to anticipate new and external developments in time</i>	257	30.4	56.4	13.2	4.16 (0.67)
<i>cooperative attitude</i>	258	24.4	63.2	12.4	4.11 (0.63)
<i>internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible</i>	257	28.4	55.6	16.0	4.10 (0.71)
<i>ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly</i>	256	27.7	55.5	16.8	4.09 (0.72)
<i>cost-consciousness</i>	257	19.1	63.8	17.2	4.00 (0.66)
<i>reports on the manager / department in the local media</i>	257	1.2	7.8	91.0	2.30 (0.89)

*) The averages and standard deviations have been calculated on the basis of the original scores, with 'very slightly / not' = 1 and 'very much' = 5.

Although the Tables 2 and 3 are based on aldermen's answers to different questions, a careful comparison of their contents may show whether there are similarities and differences between the two tables with regard to the aspects to which the aldermen attached great importance. The tables do not include the criteria to which less importance was attached, with the exception of the criterion 'reports on the manager / department in the local media'. In other words, the aldermen attached great importance to almost all

aspects listed in the Tables 2 and 3. However, some aspects were emphasized more than others.

‘Result-orientedness’ and ‘a feeling for politics’ were emphasized very much, as shown by Table 2 as well as Table 3. The criterion ‘cooperative attitude’ occupies more or less the same position in both Tables: it is rather important, but slightly less important than some other criteria. The tables also show a few minor differences, e.g. the criterion ‘internal organization of the department / management qualities’ is emphasized less in Table 3 than in Table 2. On the other hand, ‘showing initiative’ and ‘the ability to anticipate new developments in time’ (which are part of one criterion in Table 2), are emphasized more in Table 3 than in Table 2. Because of relatively low scores, Table 3 does not include the criteria ‘good contacts’ and ‘communication’, although they are rather important in Table 2. However, these criteria are quite closely connected to the criterion ‘cooperative attitude’ in Table 3.¹² Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the average values in Table 3 do not differ much and that aldermen’s average scores for some of the ‘good contacts’ criteria are just a little below 4.0 (see Appendix 1).

The rather general criterion ‘expertise’ was not part of the structured list, nor was the aspect ‘work integrally’. These criteria had been mentioned less explicitly during the previous case research interviews, perhaps because ‘expertise’ was actually regarded as something obvious.

‘Cost-consciousness’ is the last criterion in Table 3 which is emphasized much. Although the criterion ‘ability to operate within the financial budget’ does not belong to the criteria which are emphasized very much, it still occupies a good position in the middle of the list of sixteen criteria (see Appendix 1). The factor analysis shows that ‘financial control’ is one of the underlying, distinguishing dimensions, even though its explanatory power is limited. Financial aspects are important to ‘traditional’, input-controlled government organizations and the output-constrained evaluation style. However, the aldermen included financial aspects only four times in the evaluation criteria which form the basis of Table 2. Rather than using explicit financial terms, they may have expressed their interest in financial aspects in more general terms, e.g. the phrase ‘do what is planned’, a criterion in Table 2. In previous interviews, aldermen had indicated that they considered the ‘ability to operate within the financial budget’ as an

important condition which had to be met. After all, budget overruns can have serious political consequences for alderman (ter Bogt, 2001a, p. 635).

Although the Tables 2 and 3 differ in some respects, apparently their contents are quite similar. Moreover, it is clear that the criteria which were emphasized by the aldermen, despite some differences, are quite similar to the criteria which the panel of experts expected to be emphasized in the operations-conscious style (see also Appendix 1).

The aldermen placed much emphasis on such criteria as ‘a feeling for my political wishes and needs’, ‘cooperative attitude’, ‘ability to anticipate new / external developments in time’, ‘showing initiative, and ‘internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible’. These are all criteria which the experts expected the politicians using the operations-conscious style to emphasize. The main difference between the experts’ expectations and the aldermen’s opinions seems to be the degree of importance which was attached to performances and financial management of managers’ organizations. The aldermen clearly placed more emphasis on the criteria ‘result-orientedness’, ‘ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly’, and ‘cost-consciousness’ than the experts expected. This may mean that in a way the aldermen paid more attention to outputs and businesslike control of organizations than the experts assumed. This also seems to be borne out by the fact that, compared with the experts, the aldermen attached slightly less importance to the various ‘good contacts’ criteria and much less importance to the criterion ‘reports on the manager / department in the local media’.¹³

Finally, it can be concluded that the aldermen attached slightly more importance to the criterion ‘observance of rules and procedures’ than the experts expected. Yet this criterion was not emphasized much, seeing that it ranks fourteenth on the list of sixteen criteria. The criterion ‘observance of rules and procedures’ also is an aspect which is, at least formally, traditionally strongly emphasized within government organizations.

7. Discussion and summary

Many Dutch government organizations now use job appraisal interviews to discuss

and evaluate civil servants' performances. The survey of 262 aldermen shows that such job appraisal interviews are held by many municipalities.

A job appraisal interview with a professional top manager usually includes a discussion of his alderman's opinions on the manager's performances. Many Dutch municipalities now formally use output control and performance budgets. However, aldermen indicate that the factual, quantitative performance information which is available in planning and control documents usually does not play an important part in performance evaluation of professional managers. This can also be deduced from the aldermen's responses to the following statement in the survey:

When I am forming an opinion on the performance of one of my professional managers, to a certain degree performance indicators do play a part. However, my final opinion is based more on my impression of the functioning of his / her department and the extent to which he / she has a feeling for politics and generally enables me to perform well.

Of the 260 respondents, almost 88% agreed or agreed very much with this statement, which resembles the description of the operations-conscious style in Section 3. The survey findings do not indicate how far the low measurability of several governmental outputs plays a part here.

The criteria emphasized by aldermen tentatively indicate that most of them did not use a budget-constrained style or an outcome-conscious style. Table 3 and Appendix 1 show that many aldermen strongly emphasized the following criteria when they evaluated a manager's performance: 'a feeling for my political wishes and needs', 'cooperative attitude', 'result-orientedness', 'ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly', 'ability to anticipate new / external developments in time', 'showing initiative', 'cost-consciousness', and 'internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible'. This list contains a considerably wider range of criteria than the list of criteria which, according to the experts, would be strongly emphasized in the output-constrained style. Moreover, they expected that the several criteria would be largely disregarded in the output-constrained style. However, the aldermen's answers indicate that they 'disregarded' only one criterion, i.e. 'reports on the manager in local media'. The list of criteria aldermen emphasize also includes many

more aspects than the aspects which, according to the experts, would be emphasized in the outcome-conscious style. The differences between aldermen's opinions and the outcome-conscious style especially relate to such aspects as a feeling for politics, showing initiative and the ability to make the professional organization function well.

Furthermore, the aldermen possibly did not place as much emphasis on certain criteria as politicians using the output-constrained or the outcome-conscious style would do. Although they are certainly not irrelevant, in reality the aldermen placed only a 'medium' degree of emphasis on such 'businesslike', concrete and / or quantitative aspects as 'realization of performances mentioned in the budget' and 'ability to operate within the financial budget'. These aspects are of great importance to both the output-constrained and the outcome-conscious style (see also the scores on criteria o, p and q in Table A, Appendix 1). The aldermen highly valued goal- and result-orientedness, but these seem to be more general and qualitative criteria which probably also relate to the manager's attitude. The general terms which many aldermen used in their answers to the open question (see Table 2), strengthen this impression.

So it can be concluded that, as yet, the striving for output-oriented control of municipalities has not resulted in a form of control and performance evaluation by aldermen which is largely based on factual and quantitative, 'objective' performance information. This is also evident from the aldermen's responses to the statement quoted above.

However, very many municipalities do hold job appraisal interviews. And the aldermen indicated that, when they evaluated a civil servant's performance, they considered not only such aspects as 'cooperative attitude' and 'a feeling for politics' to be of great importance, but also such criteria as 'initiative', 'ability to anticipate new developments', 'expertise', 'internal organization of the department', 'cost-consciousness', 'good business management', and 'goal- and result-orientedness'. On the whole, these criteria are different from the criteria which, according to the experts, would be emphasized by aldermen using the implicit style of performance evaluation.

The aldermen indicated in the survey that, apart from such aspects as 'a feeling for politics' and a certain degree of 'cost-consciousness' on the part of the manager to be

evaluated, they attached great importance to aspects relating to the present and future functioning of the manager and his professional organization. The aldermen placed slightly less emphasis on 'good contacts' than the experts expected. However, that does not alter the impression that aldermen's subjective opinions play an important part in performance evaluation of professional top managers (see also Curtin, 2000, p. 117). This is also clear from the wide range of not very concrete evaluation criteria which were formulated by the aldermen themselves (such as: management qualities, a feeling for good business management, stand by agreements, encourage staff, a feeling for management and politics, openness, loyalty; see Table 2). It seems that aldermen tend to produce general evaluations which are based on their rather personal and subjective impressions of the activities and attitude of managers. This is also true for their opinions on seemingly 'businesslike' aspects such as 'internal organization of the department', 'good business management', 'ability to anticipate new developments', and 'goal- and result-orientedness'.

According to the experts, apart from other aspects, such aspects as 'internal organization of the department', 'showing initiative', 'ability to anticipate new developments in time', 'cooperative attitude', and 'a feeling for politicians' wishes' would be emphasized by politicians using the operations-conscious or facilitating style. The description of the operations-conscious style in Section 3, which was based on previous case research, suggests that aldermen using this style might also pay some attention to quantitative budgets and outputs. The survey results tentatively indicate that many aldermen do indeed attach great importance to several of the aspects mentioned by the experts. Moreover, the survey shows that many aldermen value cost-consciousness and that they do not ignore the financial budgets and realization of outputs. There are probably no big differences between groups of aldermen, given the limited distinctiveness of the dimensions determined through factor analysis.

The aldermen indicated that all of the elements which are emphasized in the operations-conscious style as it was previously defined played an important part in performance evaluation of their professional top managers. The criteria 'cost-consciousness' and 'ability to operate within budgets' were mentioned spontaneously by only a few aldermen (see Table 2). However, it seems that they considered these

requirements to be rather essential, although perhaps obvious, criteria. Probably a refined description of the operations-conscious style should slightly increase the emphasis on these aspects. This is even more true for such aspects as top managers' 'know-how' and 'expertise'. These aspects may be prerequisites for an organization which functions well, but they are not explicitly mentioned in the current description of the operations-conscious style.

Apparently, in the operations-conscious style - which seems to be a style which is used by many local politicians - emphasis is placed on a even larger number and wider range of criteria than was suggested before the survey of 262 aldermen was conducted. The aspect 'good financial management', an obvious precondition, should be somewhat highlighted, whilst the aspect 'expertise', which has been neglected until now, should also be added to the current characteristics of the operations-conscious style.

After these refinements, the operations-conscious style might be defined as a performance evaluation style which involves:

- emphasizing performances and outputs, without paying much attention to quantitative output data;
- emphasizing 'expertise' and all kinds of other performance aspects (managers' activities) which affect the functioning of organizations and which are regarded as important for long-term outputs and outcomes;
- giving much attention to 'the extent to which managers have a feeling for politics' and the way in which managers deal with all kinds of short-term problems and politicians' subjective, personal opinions and wishes;
- doing all this on condition that financial budgets are not exceeded.

The survey results indicate that 'businesslike' aspects usually play a certain part in politicians' performance evaluation of municipal top managers, which is therefore, in a sense, in line with the ambition of performance-oriented control of government organizations. However, performance evaluation is usually not only or primarily based on concrete and factual aspects of the functioning of managers and 'objective' information about this, but also on more general impressions and subjective opinions. The survey does not indicate whether aldermen use all the aspects of the operations-conscious style in an equally rigid manner when they evaluate managers' performances.

However, as a highly placed civil servant in a big municipality who was a member of the panel of experts remarked, ‘As a matter of fact, nothing is unimportant to politicians, particularly when things are not going all right.’

Notes

¹ 'Related aspects of performance' comprise aspects which also give an insight into outputs; for example, information on costs per unit, activities which are directly related to (difficult to measure) outputs, or the quality of outputs. In this paper, the term outputs includes these related aspects.

² When the survey was carried out, the members of the municipal councils elected the aldermen from their midst. Every four years the inhabitants of the municipalities elected the members of the municipal councils. Since March 2002 outsiders, too, can be recruited for a position as alderman.

³ The style of performance evaluation includes the performance aspects and information sources which a superior considers, as well as the flexibility or rigidity with which the superior evaluates subordinates on certain performance criteria (see for example Hopwood, 1974, pp. 109-115). The questionnaire did not directly ask for the rigidity with which the aldermen use the various criteria when they evaluate the performances of managers. However, the extent to which aldermen consider certain criteria when forming an opinion on the performance of a manager (see Appendix 1), could be an indication of the stress they put on various criteria.

⁴ The output-constrained, outcome-conscious and implicit style for the government sector were respectively derived from Hopwood's budget-constrained, profit-conscious and non-accounting style.

⁵ Outcomes are the ultimate results to be achieved with outputs. Politicians will be interested in these outcomes, particularly when they are closely connected with their own objectives and those of their political parties and government organizations. However, it is often difficult to determine the outcomes of government actions in practice. For this reason, in the outcome-conscious style probably much use has to be made of financial and output information. It is assumed that outputs contribute to outcomes and are good indications of outcomes.

⁶ Municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants often have relatively small organizations where there is not much distance between aldermen and civil servants, not much decentralization and not much need for formal controls, including job appraisal interviews (see also Moret, Ernst and Young, 1997, pp. 18-21; Van Helden, 1998a, p. 93).

⁷ No questionnaires were sent to aldermen who were interviewed in 1999 and commented on a draft of the questionnaire.

⁸ A Mann-Whitney test of the questionnaires which were returned after they had been sent out in July and of the questionnaires which were not returned until a reminder had been sent in September shows that 'early' and 'late' responses to two questions differed significantly at the 5%-level.

⁹ The respondents could clearly tick more than one answer to this question, but they hardly used the opportunity to add information about informal performance evaluations and the ways and situations in which they took place.

¹⁰ The open question made it possible for aldermen to respond 'in their own words' and to express any views, whilst the structured question, which was the basis for Table 3, might have

a biasing influence on respondents (Malhotra, 1999, p. 303). When the findings from both questions are largely similar, this could be regarded as a reinforcement of the conclusions about the performance aspects which are emphasized by aldermen.

¹¹ The aldermen's criteria and the classification of these criteria into groups were assessed by two expert colleagues as well. Their opinions on the classification of the 494 answers (248 for the first and 246 for the second criterion) were very similar to the researcher's, although in 12 cases (6 concerning the first criterion and 6 concerning the second one) the classification was changed as a result of their comments.

¹² The correlation coefficient for the variables 'cooperative attitude' and 'good contacts with me' is 0.47. The correlation between these two variables is therefore the second highest of the correlations between the sixteen variables from the structured list which were examined. Only the correlation coefficient for 'cost-consciousness' and 'ability to operate within the financial budget' was even higher, namely 0.60.

¹³ Perhaps the aldermen, like the experts, gave answers which were assumed to be 'socially acceptable' or which were based on 'prejudice'. The aldermen may have emphasized then the importance of good management control or may not have openly acknowledged any influence of the media. The experts had to give opinions on degrees of emphasis in four different styles. They may therefore have exaggerated for the sake of clarity. It is not possible to determine on the basis of the survey results if or to what extent all this is the case.

Appendix 1

This appendix contains the structured list of eighteen evaluation criteria which was given to the aldermen and the experts (see left column in table A; criteria designated with a – r). The criteria were taken from the specific definitions for the government sector of the Hopwood-styles, and previous interviews with aldermen (ter Bogt, 2001a). Using a five-point scale, the aldermen could indicate to what extent they emphasized each criterion in the performance evaluation of a professional manager. The list was also given to a group of experts in order to obtain their opinions and therefore to be able to compare the aldermen's responses with experts' opinions.

Two of these criteria (h. number of complaints by citizens, companies, etc, about the manager's department / sector; j. efficiency of the department) were not included in the analysis of the aldermen's responses, because there were significant differences between 'early' and 'late' responses to the survey.

In Table A, the information in the columns 'output-constrained style', 'outcome-conscious style', 'implicit style' and 'opartions-conscious style' is based on the responses of 17 Dutch experts on government organizations to the structured list of eighteen evaluation criteria. The experts could tick the degree of importance which, in their opinion, politicians using a particular evaluation style would attach to a particular criterion. The experts could not add any criteria to the list. Compared with the aldermen surveyed, most of the experts indicated more strongly that certain criteria were of little or rather little importance to politicians.

Table A contains not only statistical data on the experts' opinions, but also average values and standard deviations which indicate to what extent the alderman attached importance to the criteria (see column 'importance attached by aldermen'). As was indicated before, the two criteria 'number of complaints by citizens and companies about the manager's department / sector' and 'efficiency of the department' were not included. The data on the aldermen's responses are based on approx. 257 responses per criterion.

The underlined numbers refer to the criteria which have a relatively high (≥ 4.0) or a relatively low (< 3.0) average value in a particular performance evaluation style and a standard deviation < 1.0 . These criteria are assumed to be distinctive features of particular performance evaluation styles in government organizations.

Table A. Summary of experts' and aldermen's opinions; average values and standard deviations*)

	opinions of panel of experts								importance attached by aldermen	
	output-constrained style		outcome-conscious style		implicit style		operations-conscious style			
	aver.	st. dev.	aver.	st. dev.	aver.	st.dev.	aver.	st.dev.	aver.	st. dev.
a. a feeling for my political wishes and needs	2.47	1.07	3.59	.80	<u>4.41</u>	.87	<u>4.41</u>	.71	<u>4.25</u>	.65
b. cooperative attitude	<u>2.25</u>	.93	3.35	.79	<u>4.18</u>	.88	<u>4.47</u>	.62	<u>4.11</u>	.63
c. good contacts with me	2.59	1.00	3.59	.80	<u>4.47</u>	.62	<u>4.47</u>	.72	3.79	.74
d. good contacts with the municipal council	<u>2.24</u>	.90	3.29	.85	3.76	1.09	3.71	.92	3.38	.74
e. good contacts with subordinates	2.71	1.31	3.06	.90	3.71	.99	<u>4.12</u>	.49	3.99	.72
f. good contacts with citizens, companies and organizations	2.47	1.07	3.47	1.12	3.71	1.05	3.94	.56	3.82	.65
g. result-orientedness	<u>4.53</u>	.72	<u>4.47</u>	.62	<u>2.71</u>	.85	3.18	.64	<u>4.39</u>	.58
h. number of complaints by citizens, companies, etc, about the manager's department / sector	3.88	.81	<u>4.44</u>	.51	3.65	1.00	3.94	.77	not included	---
i. ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly	3.35	1.06	<u>4.24</u>	.56	<u>2.76</u>	.83	3.82	.95	<u>4.09</u>	.72
j. efficiency of the department	<u>4.24</u>	.83	3.88	.93	<u>2.41</u>	.80	3.12	.93	not included	---
k.ability to anticipate new / external developments in time	<u>2.71</u>	.99	<u>4.06</u>	.66	3.41	1.18	<u>4.24</u>	.66	<u>4.16</u>	.67
l. showing initiative	<u>2.82</u>	.95	3.88	.78	3.47	1.07	<u>4.18</u>	.64	<u>4.29</u>	.61
m. observance of rules and procedures	3.41	1.00	<u>2.65</u>	.86	3.41	.94	<u>2.65</u>	.70	3.42	.78
n. reports on the manager / department in the local media	2.59	1.06	3.53	1.07	3.71	1.16	3.88	1.05	<u>2.30</u>	.89
o. realization of performance indicators and characteristic numbers mentioned in the budget	<u>4.76</u>	.56	<u>4.06</u>	.75	2.65	1.06	3.12	.70	3.49	.85
p. ability to operate within the financial budget	<u>4.76</u>	.44	3.65	.86	<u>2.71</u>	.99	3.18	.88	3.95	.71
q. cost-consciousness	<u>4.29</u>	.77	3.59	1.18	<u>2.24</u>	.75	3.00	.94	<u>4.00</u>	.66
r. internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible	3.56	.81	3.24	1.09	3.12	.86	<u>4.24</u>	.83	<u>4.10</u>	.71

*) The experts and aldermen could give their opinion using a five-point scale, with 'very little / no' = 1 and 'very much' = 5. st.dev. = standard deviation

The boundaries ≥ 4.0 , < 3.0 , and < 1.0 are slightly arbitrary. These values were selected so that certain criteria could be disregarded for the time being, namely the criteria to which respondents attached 'medium' or quite varying degrees of importance. This does not mean,

however, that these criteria are unimportant. The boundaries help to focus attention on the performance evaluation criteria on which relatively much or relatively little emphasis was placed by the respondents.

When the above statistical data are compared, the following similarities between the criteria emphasized by the experts and the aldermen can be observed:

- emphasis on the criteria g and q in the output-constrained style;
- emphasis on the criteria g, i, and k in the outcome-conscious style;
- emphasis on the criteria a and b in the implicit style;
- emphasis on the criteria a, b, k, l, and r in the operations-conscious style.

Appendix 2

This appendix contains some data on the factor analysis of the aldermen's answers to the structured list of criteria. As was mentioned before, two criteria were not included, i.e. sixteen variables (criteria) were examined. It was decided to do a principal components analysis (= common factor analysis) and rotation using the varimax method. Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a chi-square of 893.8, df 120, $p = 0.000$, and 64.6% of the variance was due to the six original factors with an initial eigenvalue of more than 1.0. Given that each of the original six factors explained a relatively small percentage of the variance (original factor 1 explained 25.6%; the five other factors only between 6.3% and 10.7%), the distinctiveness of the factors is limited. After rotation, only 45.8% of variance was explained by the six rotated factors. The decrease in the percentage of the variance explained is due to the principal axis factoring. This method of factor analysis was chosen because it was the intention to obtain a picture of the underlying dimensions (and the common variance; see also Malhotra, 1999, p. 591). In the case of factor 1, the variables referred to as g, i, k, and l in Appendix 1 show relatively high factor loads (i.e. mostly loads > 0.4). The same is true for the variables a, b, and c in the case of factor 2, the variables p and q in the case of factor 3, the variables m, n, and o in the case of factor 4, the variables d and f in the case of factor 5, and the variables e and r in the case of factor 6 (see Appendix 1 for the criteria). The diffuse factor 4 – probably a 'residual factor' – is difficult to interpret.

Appendix 3

Relevant parts of the questionnaire *Aldermen and performance data*:

- A. Please indicate the two aspects which are, in your opinion, the most important aspects on which the performance of a professional top manager or professional manager is to be evaluated?
- a.
- b.
- B. To what extent do you consider the following criteria when forming an opinion on the performance of a professional top manager or professional manager? *Please give your opinion on all criteria.*
- A feeling for my political wishes and needs
 - Cooperative attitude
 - Good contacts with me
 - Good contacts with the municipal council
 - Good contacts with subordinates
 - Good contacts with citizens, companies and organizations
 - Result-orientedness
 - Number of complaints by citizens, companies, etc, about the manager's department / sector
 - Ability to encourage the department to work quickly and flexibly
 - Efficiency of the department
 - Ability to anticipate new / external developments in time
 - Initiative
 - Observance of rules and procedures
 - Reports on the manager / department in the local media
 - Realization of performance indicators and characteristic numbers mentioned in the budget
 - Ability to operate within the financial budget
 - Cost-consciousness
 - Internal organization of the department for which the manager is responsible

In all cases, answer categories: 1 – 5 (very little / not – very much).

- C. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:
- When I am forming an opinion on the performance of one of my professional managers, I certainly think about performance indicators and characteristic numbers. However, my final opinion is based more on my impression of the performance of his / her department and the extent to which he / she has a feeling for politics and generally enables me to perform well.

Answer categories: 1 - 5.

(Comments, if any:)

- D. 1. Do job appraisal interviews with professional top managers or professional managers take place in your municipality with some regularity (e.g. once a year)? yes – no – do not know
2. If so, are you directly or indirectly involved in these interviews – e.g. because you inform the town clerk or mayor of your opinions? yes - no
- E. Apart from job appraisal interviews, if any, do you use informal methods to let professional top managers or professional managers know what your opinions on their performances are? *NB You may circle more than one answer.*
- yes, I occasionally let them know in general terms
 - yes, particularly when I am very pleased about something
 - yes, particularly when I am very dissatisfied with something
 - no, almost never or never
 - (in your own words).
- F. Any comments / additions you would like to make:

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